

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 OMB-01 IO-13 /112 W  
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R 161151Z AUG 78  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3428  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABA  
AMEMBASSY DACCA  
AMEMBASS COLO BO  
USLO PEKING  
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA  
TAGS: PARM, IN, XO  
SUBJECT: INDIAN OCEAN DEBATE

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. SUMMARY. IN A HALF-HOUR  
DEBATE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN THE RAJYA SABHA  
AUGUST 11, SEVERAL OPPOSITION AND ONE JANATA MP  
BLAMED LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE "DEMILITARIZATION"  
TALKS ON THE US, TRIED TO GET FOREIGN MINISTER  
VAJPAYEE TO AGREE TO THAT ASSESSMENT, AND CRITICIZED  
THE GOI FOR NOT PURSUING MORE VIGOROUSLY NON-  
ALIGNED EFFORTS TOWARD AN IOZP. IN RESPONSE  
FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE REITERATED INDIA'S  
COMMITMENT TO THE IOZP, INDIRECTLY EXPRESSED  
DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE TALKS WERE NOT PROGRESSING  
AND DODGED OPPOSITION REQUESTS THAT HE SPECIFY  
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THE RESPECTIVE PRESENCE OF THE US AND USSR IN  
THE INDIAN OCEAN. ND SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS INITIAL RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON THE  
"SUSPENSION OF TALKS BETWEEN THE USA AND THE USSR  
ON THE ISSUE OF DEMILITARIZATION," VAJPAYEE STATED  
THAT BOTH SIDES HAD INFORMED THE GOI THAT, ALTHOUGH

DIFFERENCES HAD BEEN NARROWED, NO AGREEMENT ON LIMITING THEIR NAVAL PRESENCE HAD BEEN REACHED AND THERE WAS NO INDICATION WHEN TALKS WOULD BE RESUMED. ASKED BY A FOREWARD BLOCK MP WHY NO EFFECTIVE STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN YET AND WHETHER THE SOVIETS HAD RECENTLY INFORMED HIM ABOUT THE TALKS, VAJPAYEE SAID THAT "THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES" AND THAT HE COULD "ENUMERATE ALL THE POINTS OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR, BUT THAT WILL NOT TAKE US ANYWHERE." HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN A "FREE AND FRIENDLY XCHANGE OF VIEWS" RECENTLY WITH THE SOVIET AND THE GOI HAD ALSO BEEN GETTING INFORMATION FROM THE US, BUT THAT "IT IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR ME TO PASS ANY JUDGMENT." HE ADDED THAT THE GOI'S ONLY HOPE WAS THAT THE TALKS WOULD BE EXPEDITED AND THE IOZP REALIZED.

3. NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, DIEGO GARCIA WAS THE FOCUS OF A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS. A FOREWARD BLOC MP, AFTER PRAISING THE USSR FOR SUPPORTING DEMILITARIZATION AND THE IOZP AND ACCUSING THE USG OF EXPANDING DIEGO GARCIA, ASKED WHY THE GOI WAS TREATING THE ISSUE AS A BIG-POWER DISPUTE INSTEAD OF MAKING A CONCERTED EFFORT WITH OTHER NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES TO FORCE THE USG TO DISMANTLE ITS BASES AND ACCEPT THE IOZP. A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONGRESS-I MP ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WERE BASES OF OTHER NATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN BUT GAVE THE SOVIETS CREDIT FOR PROPOSING THE DEMILITARIZATION TALKS. A JANATA MEMBER CALLED DIEGO GARCIA A VERY DANGEROUS DEVELOPMENT FOR INDIA AND CHALLENGED VAJPAYEE EITHER TO NAME SOVIET BASES IN THE AREA OR TO STOP "EQUATING" THE US AND THE USSR. IN HIS RESPONSES, VAJPAYEE SAID THAT IT WAS A "WELL-KNOWN FACT THAT THE DIEGO GARCIA BASE WAS BEING STRENGHTNEED. HOWEVER, HE CONTINUED, "WE DO NOT HAVE FUL INFORMATION ABOUT ALL THE BASES AND ALSO THE FACILITIES WHICH CERTAIN POWERS ENJOY IN THIS REGION" AND THEREFORE THE GOI WANTS ALL BASES ELIMINATED. LATER CHALLENGED ON HIS CLAIM OF LACK OF INFORMATION, VAJPYAE SWITCHED FROM ENGLISH TO HINDI AND SAID, ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY'S TRANSLATION, THAT THE GOI WAS ALWAYS TRYING TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT BASES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN BUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT WANT TO MAKE SUCH INFORMATION PUBLIC UNLESS IT IS SATISFIED THAT THE INFORMATION IS CORRECT AND RELIABLE.

4. TO COMPLAINTS THAT THE GOI WAS NOT ACTIVE ENOUGH INTERNATIONALLY IN PROMOTING THE IOZP VAJPAYEE RESTATED INDIA'S POLICY THAT THE RIVALRY AMONG THE BIG POWERS MUST BE ENDED AND THAT THE LITTORAL STATES ARE IN A POSITION TO GUARANTEE FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION. HE ALSO REITERATED THAT THE GOI WAS IN FAVOR OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN BUT DID NOT THINK THAT IT WOULD PRODUCE CONCRETE RESULTS UNLESS THE BIG POWERS AND MAJOR MARITIME USERS ATTENDED. IN AN EXCHANGE IN HINDI, A JANATA MEMBER SUGGESTED THAT SINCE THE INDIAN OCEAN IS "INDIA'S OCEAN", THE GOI SHOULD SET UP ITS OWN BASES SO THAT GREAT POWERS DID NOT FILL "THE VACUUM." VAJPAYEE REPLIED THAT SUCH A POLICY WAS NOT POSSIBLE BECAUSE INDIA OPPOSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALL FOREIGN BAES IN THE AREA. HE THEN REVERTED TO HIS POINT THAT THE LITTORAL STATES COULD PROTECT FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION AND SAID THAT "IT IS NOT FOR THE FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION THAT THESE BASES ARE BEING BUILT OR THE GREAT COUNTRIES ARE EXERCISING THEIR NAVAL POWERS IN A BIG WAY." ASKED IF INDIA WAS MAKING ANY ATTEMPT TO INVOLVE CHINA IN THE "DIALOGUE TO KEEP THE INDIAN OCEAN A DEMILITARIZED ZONE," THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE A GOOD THING IF CHINA WERE INCLUDED IN THE TALKS BECAUSE THE PRC IS TAKING A GREATER INTEREST IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. END UNCLASSIFIED

5. BEGIN LOU. COMMENT: WHILE THERE WAS NOTHING REALLY NEW IN THIS EXCHANGE, EITHER IN TERMS OF THE CRITICISM OR OF INDIAN POLICY, IT STRIKES US THAT FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE WAS BEING EXCEPTIONALLY CAREFUL NOT TO CHARACTERIZE THE STATUS OF THE TALKS OR TO PROVIDE ANY DETAILS ON THE RESPECTIVE ATTITUDES CONVEYED TO THE GOI BY THE US AND THE SOVIETS. END LOU. GOHEEN

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Review Markings:**  
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